THE *COUNTER*FORCE

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #500

JANUARY 2025

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MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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This issue contains 101 reviews, contributed by:

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Biff Bifaro
Nick Odorizzi
Robert Collins
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Jake Joyce
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Willis Schenk
Noel Gardner
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Seth McBurney
Bobby Cole
Jeff Cost
Eric Anderson
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Matt Casteel
Tim Janchar
Erika Elizabeth
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THE COUNTERFORCE

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Print It Yourself.

XUI – Realities EP

Fantastic hardcore punk from the Bay Area. I don't know how I missed this EP until this assignment, but better late than never. Fast, nasty, and featuring super-evil vocals that call to mind bands like S.H.I.T. and GLUE, XUI is up there with some of the best hardcore I've heard from 2024. That's saying a lot considering the sheer amount of good music that came out last year. Eager to get this one in my collection.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Forever Never Ends

ZORN – Endless Funeral LP

Philly's metallic-driven tsunami of hardcore punk with a brutal grip, violent musicality, and a desolate, epic atmosphere (especially in the riffage from the excellent, shredding guitars) that touches on death metal's blunt, fast cadences. The vocals are well-executed, leaving the listener on the edge of each high-pitched scream. Absolutely pummeling, histrionic, D-beat-infused rhythms lead to a trance-like pogo. The sonic charges are strong on this one, and the artwork from the record and from the band seems to be very good. Each track has something to offer, highly recommended for searchers of chaotic yet well-driven songs in the metal punk vein.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Sorry State

ZWEILASTER – Wieherd LP

Third release from ZWEILASTER, the duo comprised of Marie David and Arno Kälberer from Stuttgart, Germany. *Wieherd* is full of conversational verses, with David and Kälberer speaking and singing over one another, disjointed, at times argumentative, eventually finding their way to harmony. Instruments clatter and shimmer beneath their front-of-the mix vocals; a sax comes in on the second track "Everywhere," and sneaks around throughout the album. At times, I get bedroom pop vibes, like on the opener "Allein" while at others I get a no wave sound, free of warmth, on songs like "Taube" that comes off like a TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS arrangement. The latter seems to occupy more of this LP, but moments of silliness, like the fifteen-second "An der Strandpromenade," or heartfelt crooning on "Wir fahrem in die Berge" still find a home on this very worthwhile, candy-striped album.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Tomatenplatten

V.V.M. – Crucial Burger cassette

San Francisco fastcore thrasher outfit that exults fun in their execution, featuring members of VENKMAN, THESE BASTARDS, CONQUEST FOR DEATH and more. Resemblances to the classic and most acidic side of '80s USHC, holding down histrionic, maddening cadences that approach the one-minute length while delivering great hardcore punk throughout the ten tracks, including blastbeats, breakdowns and even crazy space-like sounds that relieve the nonstop nature of their songs. Bay Area-infused and well-executed, it's a delightful option for the fastcore aficionado's cravings.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: 625 Thrashcore / Goat Power Recreation / Thrash Tapes

VERIFY – Hardcore Demo cassette

Sure, it's not hard to find a hardcore band with a one-word name that records in their rehearsal space, but that doesn't mean I can't get excited every time I find a new one. This crew from Montreal brings a battering, snarling mid-tempo take on the genre that works wonders for me. There is almost a flirtation with powerviolence (especially if the songs were half the length). The guitars have good crunch, the vocals are nice and harsh, and the drums are just the right amount of ignorant. All in, this is a tasty if not groundbreaking demo that does what it promises on the tin—rocks out with piss and vinegar in four concise tracks.

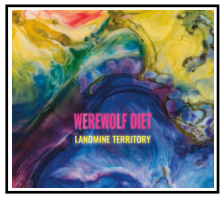
Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: self-released

VOYEUR'S MARKET – Songs O' Yule cassette

Following a 2022 demo, this is the second release from VOYEUR'S MARKET, the solo project of Ash from Calgary, Canada. Inside *Songs O' Yule*, you'll find a jangle-pop set of five Christmas originals and one contrafactum of the COUNTRY TEASERS song "Henry Kringle." If you're looking to trade in your more traditional seasonal novelty songs for a lo-fi cassette complete with scratchy guitars and an active tambourine, then look no further.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: self-released

WEREWOLF DIET – Landmine Territory LP



This Portland band specializes in bluesy punk and new-wave-informed rock that is heavy on organ and observational spoken-word lyrics. Most of the mid-tempo songs have a jammy, alt-rock feel with faux jazz touches and a surrealistic quality that imagines WEEN with JIM CARROLL on vocals. WEREWOLF DIET shines when they go punk, like on the fast and short "They Atascadero," but most of the time, they sound like the house band of your uncle's favorite cigar bar. There is definitely an audience for this kind of slightly-outside-the-box quirky rock, but it's not me.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: self-released

WHITE COLLAR – White Collar LP

Absolute banger from this Victoria-based hardcore unit, featuring members of BOOTLICKER and HEADCHEESE. Snotty, vicious, and fun as hell, this has attitude for days. The white-hot rhythm section fights for elbow room at the table with the razor-sharp guitars, while the vocals are scathingly sarcastic and brutally honest, taking no prisoners and matching the music's intensity at every turn. Send this to the poseurs in your life to put them in their place.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Static Shock

1-800-MIKEY – Digital Pet LP

A (mostly) one-man show from Australia, this isn't the kind of thing you always see in punk rock. That said, the dude is talented, and this is extremely melodic and catchy fuzz-pop. The vocals take a little bit of a backseat to the instruments, which at first kind of bugged me. But I adapted relatively quickly and grew to understand that it wasn't unintentional. Uptempo and poppy, this does remind me of some of the Subway Organization label bands from the UK in the late '80s. Really top-notch stuff here. Of the ten cuts, nearly half are under two minutes, and none are over three. That's a detail that always catches my eye (in a good way).

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Erste Theke Tonträger / Under the Gun

ACHTERLICHT – Demo III cassette

While the cassette would have one believing this is self-titled, the internet seems to refer to this solely as *Dmo III*. This is the third demo from the Netherlands-based wacky, revved-up synth punks ACHTERLICHT. Five songs of high-intensity, energetic punk with spooky Halloween synth parts often following the riffs note-for-note. All songs feel like they are absolutely racing to their end as fast as they possibly can. ACHTERLICHT rips, it's as simple as that. I saw this tape referred to on the band's Bandcamp as the "last EP of Haarlem punk band ACHTERLICHT," and I truly hope it meant the most recent EP, not final. It would be an absolute shame if ACHTERLICHT has come to an end right as I'm becoming aware of their existence. Tape released in the States on Knuckles on Stun, meaning there's a limited run of 25 copies, so act fast, you won't be disappointed.

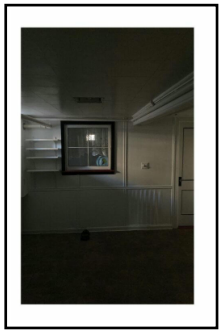
Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Gips / Knuckles on Stun

ALVILDA – C'est Déjà L'heure LP

Imagine if FRANCE GALL played with some rad guitar accompanying her. Now imagine that a little more upbeat, and with three or four FRANCE GALLs instead of just one. If you can't imagine that, imagine if the BABYSHAKES were from France. This all-female band (from France!) plays a brand of pop music that seems influenced by '60s garage pop (female or otherwise) and also punk rock. That is a beautiful combination, made more beautiful because they do it so well. And they sing in French! I salute bands from non-English speaking countries that sing in their own language.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Static Shock

BACKYARD RITUAL – Small World cassette



Solo release from Ian Campbell of POP. 1280 that pulls from post-punk, goth, and synth-pop influences to create a winning debut. Built around simple drum machine sequences, the songs grow with ENO-esque ambient textures and snaky guitar lines until you find yourself tapping your foot and reaching for the eyeliner. "RFP" begins with a moody syncopated synth bass line that opens up into a catchy, uplifting chorus. "Grasping at Straws" is the most romantic and poignant song NEW ORDER never wrote, and it's worth the price of admission alone. For a solo recording, it sounds remarkably full and well-produced, and is recommended for fans of COLD CAVE or really any kind of post-industrial electronic pop music.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: self-released

BANDAGES – Bandages LP

Anthemic, melodic punk that borders on alt-rock in the modern context. Pro recording, pro performance, fronted by powerful femme vox, and it's all really honest, really earnest, and...really good. I could also easily imagine hearing it on the radio. I'd be okay with that. Shit, I'd probably listen to the radio if it sounded like this. BANDAGES land like a band whose members consumed DILLINGER FOUR and FALL OUT BOY with equal enthusiasm, but there's also an OFF! record on the shelf next to QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE, and I bet there's someone in the band who can speak intelligently on matters of classic USHC—shit man, I'm trying to put a finger on it, but I'm still fukkn listening so these kids are doing something right.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Sad Cowboy

BART AND THE BRATS – Only Fair EP

A fresh one from French snot-rockers BART AND THE BRATS, this greasy little EP features four more of the rock-solid, low-frills, RAMONES-style stompers you've come to expect from the group. Throw on your leather jacket over your best striped tee, crack a beer, and turn it up, like a gentleman.

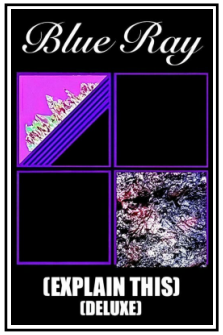
Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Dirty Water / Roaring Blood

BLISTERING DISSONANCE – Blistering Dissonance CD

Skate punk out of Asheville that brings to mind the early years of Fat Wreck, sounding a lot like GOOD RIDDANCE and PENNYWISE. Production is sharp, but there are a lot of sloppy moments where it sounds like the guitar is trying to catch up with the drums and vice versa. Nothing really wrong with that, though. It adds to the punk experience. The vocalist is easily the strongest element of this band, charismatic and loud with a whole heap of range. There's a decent amount of bitingly clever political content here, as well as a couple charming tongue-in-cheek tracks that popped me quite a bit, specifically the potential IGGY POP homage titled "I Wanna Be a Cat." The closing track "Killing Machine" has an industrial feel to it and is easily the best song on the album. I'd love to hear more of that style from them. All in all, a fun album, but not one I'd see myself returning to often. The kind of band I'd love to see live whenever they rolled through town, though.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: self-released

BLUE RAY – Explain This (Deluxe) cassette



Dark electronic post-punk band with '80s vibes. I loved the combination of more classically gothic elements (like the choir-esque intro in "Downtown") with the large variety of vocal types (distorted vocals in "On All Fours," spoken word-style in "Downtown," speaking while exhaling smoke in "Gimme") that really keep you on your toes. The variety of dark elements they utilized really contributed to their overall sound. With electronic solos in a couple of tracks, they really shine in their cover of "Wicked Game." They're able to take the song, change it to their more upbeat and post-punk style, and create a song that leaves you feeling emotionally crushed.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: XTRO

BOLA DE CRISTAL – Bola de Cristal cassette

Debut release from Seville's BOLA DE CRISTAL. Ten tracks in the synth punk/post-punk vein, featuring mid-tempo rhythms of sturdy bass and drums, under squabble-y guitars that shimmer with chorus, enchanting synths, and beautiful vocals by Carmen Marchena. This reminds me of the hearty feeling I got from PHANTASIA, who I reviewed a couple years back. I'll be excited to see where BOLA DE CRISTAL goes from here.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Flexidiscos

BRAK – Friction LP

Fiery, self-collapsing no wave sludge outta Berlin with URIN personnel contained in the three-person lineup. BRAK is arguably as raucous as that band, albeit more given to bamboozlement through wave-y tone abuse than noise punk hyperspeed. There are hooks in their songs, much as TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS and *Confusion is Sex*-era SONIC YOUTH had 'em, and if you could still dig (fellow URIN-related band) CUNTROACHES with the bestial black metal leanings excised, then *Friction* may well be your bag—"Dopamine," in particular, stacks up guitars until it's a functioning wall of psychedelic weirdness all the way down.

Reviewer: Noel Gardner
Label: Psychic Liberation

BRUTALIZE – ...Can't Relate LP

BRUTALIZE takes its name from the Scandinavian masters of lighting-fast metalized crust DRILLER KILLER's debut record. Just like Cliff (the mentor of DRILLER KILLER and previously the heavy metal agitator of ANTI-CIMEX), these maniac lads proudly wear their influences on their sleeves. Brother band to deadly metalpunk outfit PHANE, the references are all there and the lesson is engraved in their minds. Fast-paced, noisy crust à

TRÄUME – Wrzask LP

Over the past couple of years (and thanks to writing reviews for *Maximum Rocknroll*), I've become very familiar with punk from behind the Iron Curtain. When the *Wrzask* LP by TRÄUME landed in my inbox, I was excited to say the least. Moments after pressing play, I'm reminded of ZBOMBARDOWANA LALECZKA, which is the ancestral band of TRÄUME. If you like hardcore punk, then you're going to love Polish hardcore punk. A mutation all its own: Polish hardcore tends to embrace playfulness in regards to rhythm shifts and exploration of noise, so get ready for some new sounds. TRÄUME is amazing at shifting between eardrum-piercing noise to bouncing hardcore in no time flat and with ultimate finesse. If you like TRÄUME, then maybe also check out ZBOMBARDOWANA LALECZKA, ŁŁ-62, or CITY SKYLINE.

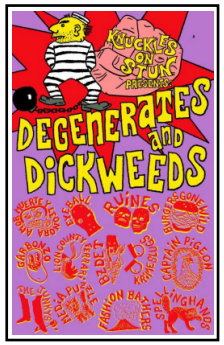
Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Quality Control HQ

TURNAROUNDS – Turnarounds LP

Musically, I hear FACE TO FACE and PROPAGANDHI in the best ways possible, if you can imagine. Although saying that this could be an Epitaph or Fat Records release will deter some readers, I believe that this record lends itself to the better side of those label's releases. Unlike many of the bands that step into any genre of DIY, these TURNAROUNDS seem less like they are trying to purposely pattern themselves around a sound as much as they are compelled to make music that sounds like this (e.g. ASEXUALS, DOUGHBOYS, NILS, STATUES). Ten songs total, and each song feels honest and musically thoughtful in a very Canadian way that only Canadians take the time to do, methinks. I can see this record making a 2024 top ten list.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Sketchy

V/A – Degenerates and Dickweeds cassette



Thirteen tracks from thirteen different artists around the world, compiled for this release from Nashville, TN-based cassette label Knuckles on Stun. Plenty of snotty, synthy egg sounds to be found here. If you've checked out anything from Under the Gun, Goodbye Boozy, or the Australian synth punk scene, you'll easily find things to dig here. As these are previously unreleased tracks, not every one is a highlight, but highlights are indeed here and ready to be discovered. Early standout "Drooler" by GARBANZO is a fantastic GEE TEE-sounding ode to some beloved mouth-breather, and "Normal Afternoon" by MEDIA PUZZLE is a great one-minute sugar rush. This collection whizzes by quickly, given the nature of the sounds, and makes perfect sense for a cassette release.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Knuckles on Stun

V/A – Scrumble CD

If you're looking for a unique composition of garage-y rock and punk, look no further. DOTRASH starts out the album with an unbelievably fast chorus in "Package" that makes you feel the need to start slam dancing immediately. The VAXXINES come into play with astute, sharp, and classically punk lyrics, my favorite ones being in the track "Drink Sake, Destroy" (no further explanation needed). OOPS brings a variety of super short songs with desperate screaming at times, and shoegaze-esque guitar at others. To end the CD, YOKOTHEMA has a more rock-style guitar with distant, droning, and melodic vocals in "うなばら," and a great subtle buildup in "イメージ." Overall, whichever artist you choose, you'll experience something fresh.

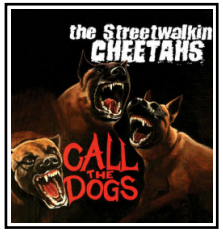
Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Hardcore Kitchen

THE MAHARAJAS – Ride the Wylde Mammoths 10″

Garage rock has always been a genre that stands in tribute to itself. From the originators of jagged rock'n'roll in the '60s covering standards to the various retro reinventions, what makes for good garage often comes down to interpretation. It's fitting then that one of Sweden's longer-running crops of the '90s garage revitalization (is it revitalization if the genre never truly goes away?) committed an entire slab of wax to one of the heavy-hitters of the late '80s. The WYLDE MAMMOTHS were a Crypt Records act out of Stockholm, and this is ten of their tracks from contemporary garage heads the MAHARAJAS. It's a loving tribute, and it would have to be, with scarcely a hair out of place. It ties together garage rock neatly in cross-generational gift wrapping, from deeply chiming '60s rock worship to the modern era. The WYLDE MAMMOTHS' Pete Maniette passed away in 2023, and it's hard to think of a better memorial than tracks like "Run From Her" being brought back to life in technicolor by as tight a band as the MAHARAJAS. It almost feels like a labor of love for true heads only, but really it serves as a beautiful entrypoint not just to Maniette's body of work but the history of garage rock in general.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Chaputa!

THE STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS – Call the Dogs 10"



Look, if you're going to name your project after a STOOGES lyric that even your uncle who only listens to the classic rock radio station knows, you're going to have to bring it. The STREETWALKIN' CHEETAHS have been around since the '90s, and so maybe at one point they did indeed bring it, but that ain't the case here. Honestly, this sounds like OK GO drank too many whiskeys and tried to be the bar band for the night. Also, if your four-song release is too long for a 7" record so you have to put it out as a 10", just take that as a sign that your songs are too long. If you truly ain't got time to make no apology—as Iggy says—well, then you shouldn't have time for five-minute songs.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Heavy Medication

TOTAL VACATION – TV EP

L.A. fastcore project with a DIY and have-fun hardcore punk ethos that could make you want to start a band with your friends. They won't stop, because they can't and they don't want to. Mad and very energetic drive, cadences, and rhythm section. Versing on scene critiques, but also love and existence, achieving the status of an interesting EP—such great speed.

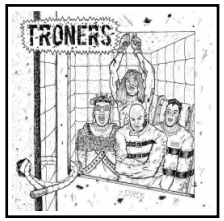
Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: self-released

TRAGIEDIA – Demo '89 EP

I first encountered TRAGIEDIA's songs via the 2009 POST REGIMENT album *Tragiedia Wg Post Regiment*, in which they collaborated with a couple original members to re-record TRAGIEDIA tunes that had not at that time been properly released. In 2015, the Todo Destruido label remedied the situation by releasing the *Punk 'Til Destruction* LP, compiling the band's two demos into one ripping full-length. So now we have Warsaw Pact revisiting the material in a more concise fashion, offering the 1989 demo as a standalone 7" with a sick booklet that fleshes out the history of the band and includes an illuminating interview. There's a very simple reason that these tracks keep remerging—they are absolutely savage. Five crushing cuts of uncompromising hardcore punk that easily demonstrate why the band was so inspiring. Crucial!

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Warsaw Pact

TRONERS – Troners LP



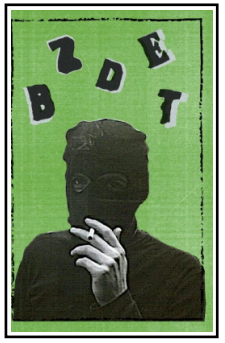
Hailing from Catalonia, TRONERS come crashing outta the gates on this self-titled debut LP. Speeding, whirlwind chaos with plenty of attitude, inspired by the likes of D.R.I. (there's a cover of "A Coffin" sung in their native language), HERESY, and HHH. This record is super solid and I'm sure it would make their influences proud. This one is at its best when it's at its speediest, which luckily is very often. Full of aggression and spirit, I really enjoyed this one!

Reviewer: Bobby Cole
Label: El Forat / Patufet / Producciones Tudancas / Purga / Rekord-ando Sello-distri / Zaragoza Desorden

I DRILLER KILLER, following the lineage of '90s ANTI-CIMEX and TOTALITÄR, with hints of metal. Vocalist Pedro goes all out, belching nihilistic themes on top of the whirlwind of chaos. Twenty songs of brutal, misanthropic punk!

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Phobia

BZDET – Kłamca cassette



Solo project coming out of Szczecin, Poland, though I can't find much more on the man behind the mask than that. This is an industrial take on the bedroom punk brand made popular during the pandemic years—instead of shamble-y, soothing moans and heartfelt hooks, we get cold drums and unsettling bass lines, plucked guitar riffs, and dry, monosyllabic vocals, distorted, droning, landing squarely on beat, making the tempo seem faster than it is. Between Syf and Xtro, BZDET's got five previous releases, as well as a stateside compilation on Tetryon Tapes, so there's plenty to listen to if this mechanical type of slanted krautrock is your cup of tea.

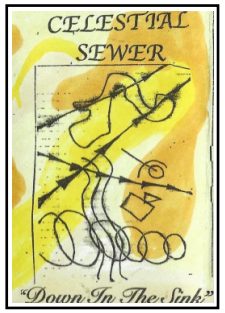
Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Syf / XTRO

BZDET – MGLA cassette

BZDET is a bedroom project from northwest Poland created by an undisclosed synth-rocker. This ten-track cassette is just the latest in BZDET output, and it's well worth your listen. Upon pressing play, there's a dance-ready energy that is difficult to deny. Songs range from the dub of "Ogród" to the hopped-up, guitar-driven punk of "Syreny," with plenty of synth-heavy, darkened bop in between. BZDET slows things down as the cassette nears its end with the closer "Historia" barely reaching the plodding pace, but carrying with it a heavy emotional weight. In all, the *MGLA* cassette draws from a host of Polish punk sounds, but also has plenty of familiar noise for the Western ear, which makes for an attention-grabbing and incredibly enjoyable listen.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Knuckles on Stun / Syf

CELESTIAL SEWER – Down in the Sink cassette



Shit-fi no wave from (I think) Olympia, consisting of stridently dissonant guitar tones armwrestling over unintelligible yelping vocals. You will know within five seconds if you are in or out, and folks, I'm in. Imagine sitting in traffic with your windows up, and the car to your left is blasting MARS and the car to your right is blasting the DEAD C. Let's also pretend it's summer with no AC, just to make it a little more uncomfortable. Through the clatter, patterns occasionally reoccur long enough to become catchy, like on the tracks "Bo Bo" and "Local Sherman." There is a part in opener "Diagonal Angle" where it sounds like someone is rhythmically tuning and detuning their guitar at a very high volume. Pretty boss anti-riff, if you ask me. I admittedly have a high tolerance for the shrill and skronky, but if you get freaky with noise, check this one out right away.

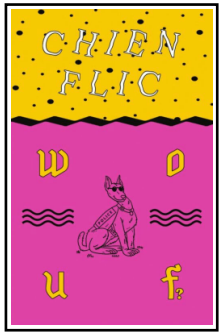
Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: self-released

CHAMPIONS – Champions 12″

Recorded around 1996, CHAMPIONS was an offshoot project featuring members of DEFIANCE, the RIFFS, and DEATHCHARGE. Almost 30 years later, here it is, finally seeing the light of day. Musically, it's pretty mid-paced Oi!-type punk and it's pretty decent. It's not necessarily anything that I personally would write home about, but it's pretty cool and I'm glad these songs managed to actually get released. Worth tracking down if you are an Oi! fan especially.

Reviewer: Bobby Cole
Label: Puke n Vomit

CHIEN FLIC – Wouf? cassette



Wouf? by CHIEN FLIC is a blast of fastcore energy from Western France, brought to you by a five-piece with not one but two vocalists—both named Claire, because why not? This tape delivers ten whirlwind tracks, each averaging about a minute, with a charming blend of aggression and humor. Its English and French lyrics tackle topics like physical fitness, good hygiene, consent, and telling you to get off your damn phone. There's also a song that is most of a recipe for apple pie, which is definitely a first in my experience. Limited to just 150 copies, the physical release has already sold out, but it remains a standout for its cute, fun, and intense energy. Check out the song "Macron Pouflasse."

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Dirty Slap / You Suffer

CHUJOZA – Niewolnicy LP

CHUJOZA is a grindcore-influenced crust band from southwestern Poland. The *Niewolnicy* LP was released in the middle of last year, and is CHUJOZA's first recorded output. Eleven songs of blistering D-beat hardcore, with various throat-shredded vocals making appearances throughout. CHUJOZA reminds me a lot of the global hardcore sound from about twenty years ago, but with a vibrant and refreshed urgency. My favorite track is currently "Czy Życie Jest Dobre?," which comes just beyond the midpoint of the album, is a bit mid-paced, and has an old school sort of anarcho-hardcore delivery. If you like raw production, grindcore energy, and absolutely frenetic vocals, then you better check out CHUJOZA.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Sanctus Propaganda

CLOWN SOUNDS – Par for the Curse cassette

This is the cassette version of the third album for California-based CLOWN SOUNDS. There is an LP version as well, which apparently has a bunch of liner notes and a zine which allegedly explains the concept of this release, none of which are included with the cassette version. I don't know, it's an unpleasant mixture of modern pop punk, blues rock, cowpunk, reggae, rock-en-general, and chicken-based song titles and sound clips? An all-around confusing novelty release. Hopefully the LP version is able to shed some light on the confusing aspects of that which is CLOWN SOUNDS.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Dead Broke / Recess

COLD WAR – Illusion: The Complete Studio Sessions LP

Sometime ago I recall coming across a COLD WAR recording of "The Machinist" and being intrigued, but that feeling wore off quickly when I grew frustrated of trying to find more from this allusive anarcho-punk band. COLD WAR was a short-lived project in the early 1980s, and their recordings were not widely distributed. However, thanks to a collaboration between Grow Your Own Records and Ohne Grund Schallplatten the entirety of COLD WAR's recorded history can be heard. If you're a fan of things like PART1, later CRASS records output, the Steve Ignorant project SCHWARTZENEGGAR, 1981, or even THATCHER ON ACID, you'll be wanting this in your stockpile. Personally, this one is going in my permanent collection.

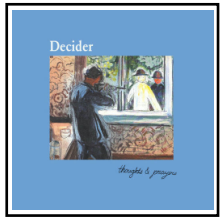
Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Grow Your Own / Ohne Grund Schallplatten

CRUSTY HI CHARGE – Crusty Hi Charge CD

A collection of wretched noise from Osaka's CRUSTY HI CHARGE, before they changed their name to SAAG in the early 2000s. Taken from a self-titled cassette, a compilation, and a 7" EP, this is a neat little package that will satisfy any itch that can be scratched with rabid vocals and chaotic instrumentation. Definitely ahead of its time by about 25 years; if this came out today, it would be in everybody's yearly top ten list.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Black Konflik

DECIDER – Thoughts & Prayers cassette



Not to be confused with the other active New York City-based DECIDER (a crossover thrash band) as I almost did when looking up this release—this DECIDER plays mid-tempo indie rock. Fortunately, I received the cassette, as I cannot find anything about this band online. Unfortunately, I received the cassette. While ing up in pace on "Backseat" and transitioning to French lyrics on "Tocson," I appreciate the multilingual approach, perhaps a nod to the Franco-Ontarian base operation from which the band stems. A placid EP, this is a fun release worth a listen.

Reviewer: Fiona Rae
Label: Discos de Muerte / Snappy Little Numbers

THE CIRCULATORS – Insufficient Fun LP

Insufficient Fun, the debut LP from San Francisco's the CIRCULATORS, delivers some seriously impressive punk'n'roll barnburners. Channeling the energy of bands like the DEVIL DOGS in my favorite tracks, they also incorporate a mix of '60s pop and RAMONES-inspired rawness. The album has the gritty, rock'n'roll sound that could easily fit into the Crypt Records catalog from the '90s, but somehow it doesn't come across as a tired nostalgia act. These guys have serious potential, and I'm interested to hear what they throw at us next. Check out the TEENGENERATE-inspired "On the Loose."

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Total Punk

THE GRIMLY PLEASED – Give Some Kicks 10"

Fun and silly cowpunk with a slight psychobilly edge. I mean this in the best way possible, but this sounds like it fell straight out of a time capsule from the early '90s. Reminds me a lot of THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS, with the musical chops of TOY DOLLS and DEAD KENNEDYS. Seems to me like they use a lot of inside jokes in their lyrics, which I know can be a turnoff for those who value more substance in their poetry, but I've always enjoyed peeking through the window of someone's world. Even when the jokes are a tad more cryptic, they're written well enough to be relatable. Take their track "Thank You, Ben Morgan"—an ode to someone who I assume was once their recording engineer. "Thank you, Ben Morgan / Thank you for being so cool /Thank you, Ben Morgan / You didn't even use Pro-Tools." I don't care who you are, that's some charming wordsmithing right there.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: self-released

THE IN-FUZZED – Fuzz Out!! LP

Fuzz Out!! is the second LP from the IN-FUZZED, coming at us from Perpignan, France and a band that's clearly deep into this '60s fuzz-worshipping garage rock nostalgia trip, much like FORD'S FUZZ INFERNO. This album isn't exactly my vibe—it sounds like '60s music through and through, and I'm probably missing the finer details that fans of this genre would appreciate. It's mostly inoffensive, but I can't see myself sitting down to listen to it for fun. Maybe it's better as party or club music, or as the soundtrack to a scene in a movie. The track "Sex Sex Sex," despite the promising title, is basically five minutes of improvisational nonsense that sounds like something they recorded during a band practice. If you're into music that's all vibe and no bite, this might be your jam.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Pigmé

THE JACKETS – Intuition LP

Self-described as garage rock, I find this a little too slick to fall into that category. Mid-tempo and melodic, I think this female-fronted trio is more power pop than anything else. They're definitely a talented bunch and the songs are very catchy, but somehow it all seems a little contrived to me. And outside of a little fuzz here and there, I'm not buying the garage rock billing.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Chaputa!

THE LOSERS – Land of Opportunity LP

The LOSERS from San Fran play snarling hardcore punk with a foreboding tone that recalls some of the genre's founding fathers. These classic-sounding tunes are rough-edged and direct, but given to moments of introspection in that early '80s SoCal kind of way. With lyrics extolling aggravation towards various societal ills, this is aggressive music for cathartic release, armed with plenty of attitude and some pretty sharp riffs. File under "uncannily authentic O.G. HC."

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: 11 PM

beat band (with the occasional skank). The tropes and themes of D-beat are there, especially in the lyrics, but the blatantly digital drums just provide an uncanny yet abrasive feeling. The whole premise makes a lot of sense and it is very well-put-together, and sounds especially refreshing. If I had listened to this release earlier, it would have gone straight to my tops of 2024.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: self-released

STREET SWEEPER – Don't Wait EP

This is as straight-ahead and swaggering as rock'n'roll gets. Just pure attitude and energy, recorded simply and done absolutely right. In just four tracks, this Melbourne act showcases a knack for wild melodic rock that harkens back to when the EXPLODING HEARTS first gainfully won all our attention. Of note here is guitarist and singer Allan Stacey's near croon, a singer who has plenty of attitude but isn't afraid to belt it out with sincerity. There's really not a trace of irony to be found here, which is always refreshing. The band leaves themselves nothing to hide behind, just tracks like "Out to Dry," which revs its motor and has a brief but delicious hook that leaves me wanting more and more. Worth the shipping from Australia and then some.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Legless

STRENGSBREW – A Little Trust / Cherry Red 7″

Glam/power pop rock that sounds like it came straight out of the early '70s. More akin to the MAMAS AND THE PAPAS and the poppier side of BLUE ÖYSTER CULT than anything closely resembling punk. At times there's a surfy element to it all, as well as the occasional fat guitar riff, but this is just the same old sound that's been done hundreds of thousands of times since your parents were kids. Don't get me wrong, the band is obviously very talented and the production is spot-on. I think this may pique the interest of those who are fans of bands like the NICE BOYS, but I don't expect it to quench that sort of thirst, either.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Chaputa!

SØRDÏD – Reality's a War EP

Roachleg releases always get me excited, as I know that I'm about to listen to the rawest, most uncompromising punk around. SØRDÏD is just that! Five tracks of the most abrasive crasher crust last year had to offer, marked by aggressive, ear-damaging riffing, violently precise drumming, and a viscerally insane vocal delivery, which is a standout for me. Eight minutes of pure raw punk madness that follows the blueprint left by DISCHARGE and then throws it in a blender. An essential piece of modern buzzsaw punk for noise addicts.

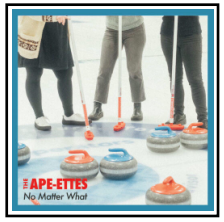
Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Roachleg

THE ANCHORITE FOUR – Vol. 1 LP

I like to go into a new album blind so I can manage any of the biases I have that will affect how I digest an unfamiliar band. Just to catch you all up to speed, this record here is actually a re-release of songs from the ANCHORITE FOUR's debut CD from 2002. Now, if I had done my research prior to this, I would have known that *Vol. 1* was just a product of its time. However, my immediate reaction to this slab was "Wow, the kids these days have really nailed that early '00s emo/pop punk sound!" And honestly, that scenario would be much more impressive to me. Don't get me wrong, this is a fun album. It brings to mind a lot of the Chicago pop punk bands I grew up around, like 504 PLAN and KNOCKOUT. But if I were to have heard this twenty years ago, it would have just sounded like everything else then. Regardless, if you're nostalgic for this time period like I am, then you'll love this. It's not bad by any means, and the production is so polished that I still can't believe this was recorded over two decades ago. I just don't know if this will speak to the majority of *MRR* readers.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Tone Deaf, Inc.

THE APE-ETTES – No Matter What EP

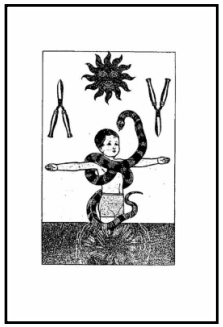


Setting subtle sonic fires in Canada, the APE-ETTES have released an enjoyably silly four-minute EP. Simply put, it's an uncomplicated listen and friendly to all. Generally mixed with tight tempos, a guitar follows a wave of nonchalant melody, and vocalist Julie maintains as a conductor in a march of confidence-infused singing. *No Matter What* is garage pop for those who love sweaters, friendship bracelets, and Wes Anderson films. Pick-

the opening track, or the fact the band does an incredibly castrated-sounding STOOGES cover, may trick some people into thinking that this is a garage-esque punk band, a vast majority of the songs on this cassette range from alt-rock revival to artsy, singsongy, early '00s-style indie rock to acoustic singer-songwriter fluff. Aside from the aforementioned, I can't imagine anything on this cassette being on any sort of punk music enthusiast's radar. This feels like a testament to just how few places there are remaining that will review cassettes as a viable music medium. This has absolutely no place being reviewed in *Maximum Rocknroll.*

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Digital Hotdogs

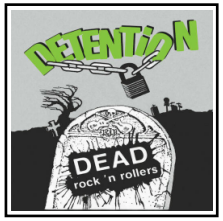
DELL'ANIMA NELLA SERPE – Tre Salti Delie Streghe cassette



This Italian techno-punk band refers to their sound as digital hardcore, which recalls the first time I heard that genre signifier in the '90s with ATARI TEENAGE RIOT. Much like that band, DELL'ANIMA NELLA SERPE employs angry, dueling male and female vocals over heavy distorted beats and samples. Expanding from Alex Eiffel's pounding 808 destruction, this recording pulls from varied sections of the techno and rave underground with great effect. "Rabbia Post Tso" moves from a near-amen break pattern to full drum and bass, and "Melissa P" centers around heavy dubstep wobbles. The band really shines in the slow jams, where a sinister crawling synth haunts the proceedings, like on "Tre Salti Delle Streghe" and woozy standout "L'arte Di Fare Schifo." The final track centers around a protest chant with cavernous, murky production that highlights the darkness of the whole album. This is punk first and foremost, but done so with careful consideration to complement their vocals with foreboding textures.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: XTRO

DETENTION – Dead Rock 'N Rollers LP



This is early 1980s hardcore punk from New Jersey, and yes, that is the same art as used on *Killed By Death #2*—DETENTION is also on that album. New Jersey has always been a hotbed of hardcore punk bands. They are the most densely populated state in the country, so of course they are. DETENTION was there at the beginning of the New Jersey hardcore punk scene, and their sound at times is in the same territory as the ANGRY SAMOANS and fellow New Jersey hardcore punkers T.M.A. This collection has their 7″, their mini-LP, and a few unreleased songs to round it out. The highlight is still their classic song "Dead Rock 'N Rollers," and it's nice to have an official copy that I don't have to pay $500 for. Limited 100 on clear and 200 on black, so if you want this, you probably should not wait to buy it.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Left for Dead

DIZZY DAZE – Glitchy Masterpiece CD

Glitchy Masterpiece, the debut full-length from Tokyo's DIZZY DAZE, mixes five new tracks with five remixed or re-recorded favorites, delivering a noisy, '90s garage rock vibe that sneaks up on you with repeated listens. Drawing clear inspiration from DRIVE LIKE JEHU (though without the late Rick Froberg's vocal assets), the album really hits its stride for me with songs that muscle-in a bit of '70s proto-punk, like "Evidence." Despite the band's cutesy name, the energy here is gritty and fun, even if it eventually had me itching to revisit the classics that sparked it. Available on CD or cassette for your nostalgic pleasure. Check out "Proto-Being."

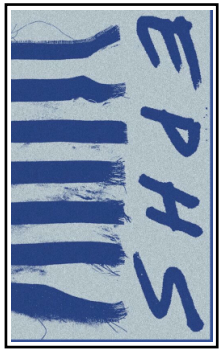
Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: self-released

DUSTPAN – Drunkard Noise EP+CD

This was my introduction to Japan's DUSTPAN, who have somehow eluded me for the last, uh, twenty-plus years. I'm glad to have rectified that situation, 'cause this band absolutely kills. Self-proclaimed purveyors of drunkard hardcore punk, DUSTPAN harnesses speed and ferocity without sacrificing the integrity of their riffs. They may dabble with a pogo beat here and there (they are drunkards after all), but they really whip when the pedal is to the floor, playing unbridled thrashy fastcore not unlike JELLYROLL ROCKHEADS or EXCLAIM. All go, no slow. This rules!

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Skull Scream

EPHS – Frayed Flag cassette



Primitive econo-punk from a Pennsylvanian home recording project that has clearly spent some time trawling for scraps in the adjoining junkyards of *Messthetics* and KBD—the trifecta of cover songs included here (the PRATS' "Disco Pope," "Teenagers" from Fred and Toody Cole's RATS, and "Living on Nerve Ends" by CLEANERS FROM VENUS) is telling. Spartan as hell, with treble-heavy guitar done early MEKONS/BILLY CHILDISH-style, drums that exist somewhere along the continuum of "cardboard box" to "trash can," but often just sound like (and might be?) one continuously bashed tambourine, and understated bass that actually does most of the work of keeping these eighteen(!) tracks steady on the rails. Alternate mixes of the last six tracks on *Frayed Flag* were originally released on a cassette called *No Riots* from 2018, a period in time where there was no shortage of shambling, dole-line post-punk fetishization from modern upstarts, whether it was the SUBURBAN HOMES stripping the likes of the DESPERATE BICYCLES and SWELL MAPS for parts, or PRIVATE SECTOR generating their own blown-out photocopy of "Disco Pope." The big difference is that those bands were all UK-based and sounded the part, while EPHS is unmistakably American—the blunt, barked vocals in tracks like "No Way" and "Pointless Machine" are firmly rooted in late '70s/early '80s US punk (Dangerhouse, et al), with the ragged, speedy crash of "Mr. E.G.O." and "Subdivision" working an almost URINALS-ish angle. Not too shabby (beyond the obvious).

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: self-released

EDGAR – Places We Live, Places We Die LP

Formed in 1994 and breaking up just a couple of years later, Long Island screamo band EDGAR, with members who went on to play in the STATE SECEDES and LAST DAYS OF AUGUST, reunited in 2019 before settling down to write a new album during the pandemic. The result, *Places We Live, Places We Die*, feels like a time capsule from 30 years ago, firmly mid-tempo and blending discordant and harmonic guitar lines reflecting the influence of '90s post-hardcore from D.C. Bob English alternates between intense scream-singing and...something I don't know how else to describe other than "musical talking." While his vocal highs aren't as sweet as they were on the TETSUO split, he still delivers a strong performance, supported by interesting songwriting and solid musicianship from the band. The result is a satisfying, nostalgic listen for fans of '90s-era screamo with a D.C. twist. Check out "Failing as Humans."

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Council / Small Hand Factory / Sunken Temple

EGGHEAD. – Dumb Songs for Smart People LP

This is the first vinyl release of the 1999 compilation put out by Mutant Pop Records on CD. NYC's EGGHEAD plays simple, lo-fi punk pop songs about unrequited love, bad jobs, and growing up. No doubt this could have been a Lookout! release, as the songs stand up to the oeuvre of the MR. T EXPERIENCE, SQUIRTGUN, and the TEEN IDOLS. What sets this apart is the rough, rushed, underground sound and the feeling that they don't take themselves too seriously, but are equally adept at crafting two-minute irreverent opuses.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Dead Broke / Moms Basement

EVENING STANDARDS – The Shining LP

Nice indie pop from Gainesville, FL by way of Bloomington, IN. There is a familiar lineage in the sounds here, but said sounds are delivered squarely through a 2024 lens. By that, I mean certain bands and labels of the past two decades will come to mind while listening—LEMURIA, RUN FOREVER, PLACES TO HIDE—but the proliferation of Americana and alt-country can be found peppered throughout these tracks as well. In fact, it's those tracks with slide guitar ("Family Man") or the dual vocals and harmonies ("Exploding Head") that stand out the most here, because they do feel like they are attempting to tread new ground. The tracks that follow the more traditional-sounding indie/pop punk template tend to wash over without leaving much of an imprint ("Edgelord"). EVENING STANDARDS relocating to the home of The Fest and No Idea Records makes a lot of sense, and I hope they keep exploring open chords over power chords, especially if it means more tracks like the album's closer "Mountain Top."

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Dead Broke

unexpected driving, stomping tracks. Sure, nothing's as pummeling as "Plastic Rows" (which is off the *Fall From Grace* 7" and is absolutely worth a listen), but there are certainly cool aspects hidden within this long cassette. There are a lot of "leaving the mic running during practice sessions" sounds and jamming while working out the kinks in songs. Probably a very cool release for a Chicago-based label to get to put out as an active piece of history, but I would bill it as a demo session, certainly not the band's second full-length release. Cassette is limited to 100 copies and not available anywhere digitally. Essential for the first-wave Chicago punk purists out there.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: No Sides

SKISM – Somebody's Baby CD

In Plato's *Allegory of the Cave*, he uses the conceit of prisoners chained up inside a cave since birth, who know nothing of the outside world. From inside their confinement, they see shadows cast by other objects passing in front of a fire. For the prisoners, who have known nothing else, these shadows represent their reality. For them, this is absolute truth, despite these only being replications, images of the objects; a poor rendering of true reality. SKISM is a shitty shadow on a shittier cave wall. It sounds like punk music that was written for a sitcom. To borrow a phrase from the great Bill Shankly, if SKISM was playing at the bottom of my garden, I'd draw the curtains. Shite.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Rotten Bastard

SLINKY – Saddest Girl / Run and Run 7″

Florida melodic punk from the '90s reimagined brilliantly in 2024—when I first dropped the needle, I thought I was listening to a new band harnessing the sounds of a forgotten DIY past, when I was actually listening to a band reimagining themselves as adults. "Saddest Girl" is a perfect example of the (sub)genre, an energetic wistful missive that's light-years from the love song that the listener might mistake it for. And I'm gonna stop the review there, because that A-side is so damn good, and the flip is an utterly forgettable butchering of a PSYCHEDELIC FURS track.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: A.D.D.

SPEED PLANS – D.U.I. EP

Pittsburgh freaks back at it with an exceedingly gnarly follow up to their 2023 full-length. If you loved *Statues of God* (I did), then this is a no-brainer. The formula hasn't changed—fast, '80s-inspired hardcore punk that harkens back to the classics—but, this seems leaner, meaner, and just impenetrably tough. Oozing with unadulterated hatred for everyone and everything, *D.U.I.* finds SPEED PLANS at their most bloodthirsty point yet. Obviously, I'm here for it. "Shut Up," followed by "Shut the Fuck Up," is sheer genius. And the line in the last song, "My lifestyle determines your deathstyle," evokes one of the best moments in potentially the greatest buddy-comedy of all time, *Some Kind of Monster*. It's almost too good.

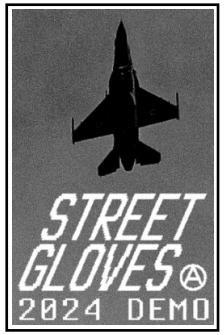
Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Convulse

STIFF RICHARDS – GFC / Empty Barrels 7″

Breaking the silence of Aussie garage punkers STIFF RICHARDS after a four-year hiatus following their 2020 *State of Mind* LP, this short and explosive 45" simply slaps. A catchy and rocking A-side leads into an uncharacteristically fast and ripping B-side, sounding like the SAINTS on speed and leaving you wanting more. Is the start of a great new era for these Melbourne menaces? Stay tuned!

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Drunken Sailor

STREET GLOVES – 2024 Demo cassette



In a dystopian future, the human/machine connection has evolved into a pervasive yet oppressive network, where individuals are constantly connected to a vast digital framework that monitors thoughts. This integration blurs the lines between human agency and algorithmic control, and is a theme that has been prevalent throughout many of the works that inspired the inception of D-beat. STREET GLOVES push the limits of the D-beat genre with their unique brand of E-beat (as in electronic D-beat) and incorporate the feeling of a cyberpunk-esque version of DISCHARGE. Several bands have incorporated digital aspects to punk, like A.I.D.S., L.O.T.I.O.N., or SCUMPUTER, but STREET GLOVES are a full-on D-

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: HoZac

SCHOOL OF THE AMERICAS – All Clean All Clear cassette

Raw-as-fuck noise rock from this Connecticut band. Simple, brutal guitar lines and hollered vocals pummel the listener and occasionally slide into a devastating slow-motion groove. These four tracks crush with heaviness and recall UNSANE at their nastiest. Also of note are the political and religious sound clips, which, coupled with the official-looking seals on the tape shells and internal memo look of the cover art, evoke a NATION OF ULYSSES-style illicit data file. It rules in the scabbiest, most punishing way possible. Check it out.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: self-released

SCROUNGER – Complete Discography LP

On August 8, 2023, August Golden was murdered during a mass shooting at the punk house Nudieland in Minnesota. The shooting was a hate crime motivated toward the LGBTQ community represented at the show. Golden was a member of the band SCROUNGER and a central guiding light to the punk scene. His influence was far-reaching outside the Minneapolis orbit. It's often difficult and debatable if we can, or should, separate art from the context it's created in. In that sentiment, this final collection of the band's recordings is an homage to Golden, the DIY scene, and the ethos of standing up for what you believe in and fighting the good fight. Side A has scrappy, lo-fi, heart-on-sleeve anthems in the spirit of SHOTWELL, ADD/C, and BENT OUTTA SHAPE. It captures profoundly the sounds and temperaments born out of basement shows and punk houses in the early '00s. That side ominously and appropriately closes with a HICKEY cover, "Make Sure There Aren't Any Squares at My Funeral." Side B has a collection of acoustic songs including "Country Time," a cover of an early THIS IS MY FIST song which is an alternate version of "E-Ville Part 2" off their *History of Rats* album. There's also a ZERO BOYS cover and an acoustic version of the HICKEY song from Side A. The album was remixed by Ashley Krey from SEXY, whose opus "Por La Vida" has been a nonconformist cyanotype for the DIY spirit of this time—a mantle this album dutifully carries on.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Black Mold

SEEIN RED – Refuse Resist LP

Featuring members from the mighty LÄRM, this is a welcome return of a highly political Dutch hardcore band coming correct with antifa-fueled vitriol. This is unabashed fash-bashing music, and it sounds like it, too. Tough as nails, especially with a biting bass tone that rides high in the mix (a favorite trick of mine). The songs often don't even make it past the minute mark, giving it that classic breakneck hardcore speed I crave. Truly uncompromising stuff from top to bottom, done in the old school (best school) way but with enough modern touches to keep it fresh. There are a lot of bands dipping into the well of this subsect of hardcore, and it's always good to have someone show how it's done.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Armageddon

SHAFRAH – بنات المدينه Bnat El Medinah LP

I really don't know anything about this band other than that they play hardcore punk. A little melodic at times, and some real bootstompers at other times. I'd even go as far as saying that at least one of the songs reminds of the kind of hardcore that BOSTON STRANGLER is known for. They also play some fast hardcore and some well-thought-out melodic punk, kind of like what CHAIN CULT is known for now. This is a very enjoyable record and I'd love to see them live.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Saalepower 2

SILVER ABUSE – Ruff Kuts 2012—2014 cassette

A bizarre and interesting piece of punk history here. SILVER ABUSE is known as being the second punk band ever from the Chicago, IL area, originally forming in 1977. With a bunch of lineup changes and long hiatuses, this is only the third SILVER ABUSE release in their almost 50 years of existence. The *Fall From Grace* EP was released in 1982, its follow-up was the *Consider the Pigeon* LP not released until 2016, and finally this cassette, released in 2024, is outtakes/alternate versions of the *Consider the Pigeon* LP session. A vast majority of the songs on this cassette are freeform, plodding, goofy no wave absurdity, which isn't unexpected if you've listened to the band's debut EP. Also similar to the first EP, there are the occasional

EXO – Exo demo cassette

Stunning demo from this NYC band that conceptualizes the fragile life of insects through punk songs layered with music box keys and ethereal harmonized vocals. The tape opens with a moody toy piano instrumental piece accompanied by post-punk-leaning bass, and then continues with tracks that, although they definitely register as punk, have complex compositions of interweaving synths and breathy vocal patterns which sound otherworldly and childlike. EXO captures the vibe of DOLLHOUSE with the vocals of HELEN, and is an essential listen if you like intricate, vulnerable punk rock.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Roachleg

FAULTY COGNITIONS – Somehow, We Are Here cassette

San Antonio's FAULTY COGNITIONS claim '80s college rock as a foundational influence and you can hear it. especially in the excellent album opener "Sun Sun Go Away" that's equal parts NEW ORDER and J Mascis. Overall, I find the band's sound to be a soupier mix of alternative rock, but I don't think that's a bad thing. Similar to the earnestness of a band like the defunct BUGG that found its home in the hearts of punks, this is a melody-forward sound that is big on hooks and a downer vibe with a bouncy beat. It ultimately works wonders, even if the songs start to feel a bit samey. Still, that's part of the charm: a band with focus that can pull off the same tricks again and again and land them consistently. By the time you hear an honest-to-god '90s alt-rock radio guitar solo in "Your Inheritance," you ought to be hooked. I certainly am.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Dead Broke

FAZE – Big Upsetter 12″

This record starts off with some stomping reminiscent of late '90s/early '00s Japanese hardcore, mixed with some of the bands that were coming out of Boston in the '10s. Then they bring in some massive hardcore hooks and top it off with some heavy psych guitar leads. They move with ease into what I imagine an acid-induced trance would sound like with the song "Who Does Your Daddy Sell His Guns To?," which then explodes into a massive, bass-heavy riff. Then another massive hook comes in, and so forth. A fantastic listen. This band must be a blast to see live.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: 11 PM

FESTA DEL PERDONO – Società Mentale EP

Post-punk, sort of dark rock/punk band. I was really drawn to the vocals on this EP, as they were sort of punk-style speaking, and borderline rap at times due to the sheer speed at which he was singing and speaking. My favorite track was "Pomeriggio Dorato," as it had a more spooky and atmospheric intro, followed by almost ska-style guitar, reminiscent of "Ghost Town" by the SPECIALS. It also had a great bass interlude in the middle of the track. Overall, get ready to get immersed in a dark and wonderfully gloomy atmosphere.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus

FREEZEHEADS / LINDA & THE LOSERS – split EP

On the A-side, FREEZEHEADS give us two tracks of RAMONES-y pop punking with classic chord progressions and repetitive lyrics, complete with some requisite "I don't wanna"s. Flip it over, and LINDA & THE LOSERS is more of a noisy, LOLI & THE CHONES-type affair, with its simple snottiness and shouted vocal approach. Beer will no doubt be spilled on copies of this record at house ragers in the near future.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Mister Face

GOLF WAR / TIDES – split EP

Great split EP from a couple bands out of the Tampa area. TIDES kick things off with a sound that brings to mind No Idea Records. Go figure! Very heavy LATTERMAN/HOT WATER MUSIC energy. Reminds me of later-era SPITALFIELD as well. On the opposite side, we have GOLF WAR and their batch of golf-themed hardcore songs, opening with a two-second track that would make the DESCENDENTS blush. I wonder what the ERADICATOR would have to say about all of this? Staunchly different from the A-side, and I'm all

"fore" it. I love when splits have two completely different types of artists. Well worth a spin.

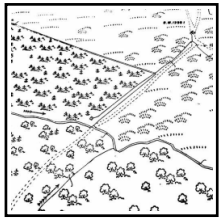
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: A.D.D.

GOSSIP COLLAR – Spinning Silk for Parasites LP

Classic goth, darkwave, post-punk band. Very '80s-sounding with great gothic lyrics, like "Why does he have no head?" in the track "Midnight Rider" (possibly a nod to their awesome album cover of a headless spectre holding a candle). I can't decide on my favorite track, but I think it's between "Seventeen," which is reminiscent of the CURE, or "Hiding Place" with its great spooky intro. There's lots of good, classic, gothic bass at the start of a couple songs, and there's a good balance of distorted guitar in contrast with more melodic and hypnotizing guitar lines throughout the album. Overall, get your eyeliner and black clothes ready, because you're going to want to become goth after listening to this.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: No Norms

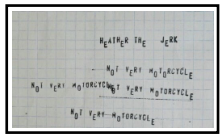
HALF BRICK – Half Brick cassette



"This is the Shrewsbury sound," says a handwritten insert inside my copy of the handmade J-card of HALF BRICK's second cassette. It's fair to say this English market town has not spawned many other bands worthy of this claim in its thousand-year or so history, therefore let it be known that whirlwind herbert punk blare will ring through the streets as you shop for vapes and phone accessories. It's pleasingly unclear what HALF BRICK is gunning for here, but it comes off to me as cats with a mysterious guy hardcore grounding trying their hand at *Bored Teenagers*-type late '70s church hall punk crossed with '90s turbo garage à la Crypt Records. The singer sounds like a tougher Billy Childish, the guitarist cranks out hairy solos for fun, and the lyrics "Give yourself a hefty pat on the back" ("Good Intentions") are, I have a feeling, not as wholesome as they read on paper.

Reviewer: Noel Gardner
Label: self-released

HEATHER THE JERK – Not Very Motorcycle cassette



Not Very Motorcycle is an impressive monument to the power of Heather Sawyer's solo musical wit. With her previous experience in Wisconsinite punk escapades, it is no surprise that her (assumedly) releases under HEATHER THE JERK strike the same satisfying chord. With a charming "bedroom recording" texture to the music, this album classifies a youthful spring break tuneage common with pop punk. This is a very danceable album with echoing, matter-of-fact vocals, wacky digital piano, and fun guitar riffs. The drums are great too, though a bit muffled. I also appreciate her vehement use of her scraggly (and very cute) white dog in her music promotion. My favorite song is "SFGE," which perfectly encapsulates the peachy, raw, exciting energy surrounding this precious album.

Reviewer: Fiona Rae
Label: Certified PR

HEATSEEKER – Illusion of Will EP

Damn, this really smokes! HEATSEEKER goes off like a guided missile, set to blast your stereo to bits. Six unrelenting tracks of raging punk that blends elements of Swedish hardcore with youth crew, "capital H" hardcore, including moshy breakdowns and backing gang vocals. Not the kind of thing I ordinarily gravitate toward, but the riffs cannot be denied. When ripping through the D-beat parts, it's just pure fist-pumping nastiness. And they totally nail the breakdowns. I bet kids lose their minds at HEATSEEKER gigs. "Echo Chamber" is my personal favorite here, but there's not a dull moment to be found. Warsaw hardcore for the win!

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Refuse

IMPOTENTIE – Zonder Titel Deze Keer LP

Expertly-played Oi!/post-punk/deathrock from international punks IMPOTENTIE. For having such heavy and thoughtful lyrics addressing racism and colonialism, the band does a good job of keeping things sonically upbeat and accessible. On "Sloop De Grens," they manage to pull influence from both the RAMONES and BLITZ, while "Die Staan Daar Nog" features a chugging riff that is as tough as it is infectious. This one can't be recommended enough, for fans of RIXE, FLASH, and '80s punk in general.

a 10", *Not Allowed* dips into a range of raucous rock'n'roll styles, celebrating the gritty simplicity of the juiciest proto-punk, the jumped-up dynamics of 1990s budget rock, and all adjacent vibrations in between. While the STOOGES-like title track is a certain standout, the soulful "Tin Foil Hat" best manages to showcase all these sources of inspiration in a single song. These guys are indeed keepin' it real, even if their chosen moniker sounds like they asked Chat GPT to spit out a garage punk band name.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Alien Snatch

REFUSE – Demo '89 LP

Before they became UNDERTOW, these Seattle-area highschoolers were blasting out raw yet earnest, straight-ahead (pun semi-intended) scissor-beat hardcore before they could even drive, with this demo and a comp track as their sole recorded output. They played shows around Washington with fellow Seattle straightedgers BROTHERHOOD, who also encouraged them as a band and likely served as a musical influence up to a point, though the speed of FALSE LIBERTY probably left a bigger mark on their sound (albeit minus the crossover air), and of course with melodies, riffs, lyrics, and vocal patterns in line with the then-recently-emerged youth crew genre. Most of REFUSE's song structures are fairly simple and repetitive: brief intros, fast verses, elongated and often vocalless breakdowns, sometimes a delay effect on the vocals, and drums that are often a blur to the point that they lack definition. but I dunno if any other band with X'd up hands was playing this fast in 1989. Refuse—the label—has always done a great job with the packaging and contextualization of the unearthed recordings that they put out into the world, and here you get preserved interviews, ads, reviews, flyers and other ephemera. While to me this demo is ultimately more of a historical curiosity than something essential, for anyone like myself who is interested in the less-treaded corners of Washington State's punk and hardcore history (and especially that which isn't being billed as only important due to being some grunge guy's early punk band), I'd suggest checking it out.

Reviewer: Dan Goetz
Label: Refuse

RITUAL ERROR – Dial in the Ghost LP

Barrelling, ear-ringing, and rhythm-forward post-hardcore with emo tendencies from a London band whose sound is—for now?—unfashionable, which, combined with the thoughtful muscularity of the results, makes me appreciate RITUAL ERROR all the more. With a curious (and good) habit of getting jazzier and more complex the faster their tempos, there's some DRIVE LIKE JEHU in Okala Elesia's guitar tone, HOOVER in the tight arrangements, maybe CIRCUS LUPUS at certain points; I think this band would have found a warm welcome in a few discrete parts of the mid-2000s UK scene. Lyrics are impassioned if often indirect, "Tear Jerker" notable for opening with a sample of a M*rgaret Th*tcher speech before lamenting how Britain's dullard class have been "diagnosed with nostalgia for cars, working hours and flags."

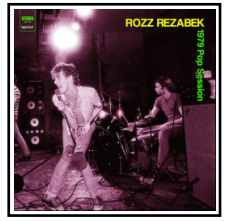
Reviewer: Noel Gardner
Label: TNS

ROTARY CLUB – Sphere of Service LP

Punk four-piece from Reno. These guys sure know how to stick to a theme and really work it to unique angles. Themes of telephones were very present throughout the record. Besides the titles of some songs ("Touch Tone," "My Landline," etc.), I loved how they included other elements like a phone dialing in the chorus of "New Communication," or the chanting of a phone number in "My Landline," or even just the more subtle elements like having a good amount of call-and-response in the vocals, mimicking a conversation had on a telephone. I just loved the unique edge they brought to their fast songs with witty lyrics and classic punk energy.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Iron Lung

ROZZ REZABEK – 1979 Pop Session LP



Previously misattributed as a late recording from San Francisco first-wavers NEGATIVE TREND when released as the unauthorized *The Pop Sessions* CD by White Noise Records in 1998, these nine tracks are actually solo efforts from the band's former singer, the now-legendary ROZZ REZABEK, recorded in 1979 after he had parted ways with the group. This official LP release from HoZac is setting the record straight. The set captures the brief, yet potent moment in time when punk had just begun mutating into the hardcore styles that would dominate its presence in the years that would follow, and the sound of these tunes fits squarely between that of the earliest incarnations of BLACK FLAG and the first CIRCLE JERKS LP. The agitated rocking of the genre's early days was approaching its boiling point, and few documents capture the era as definitively as this. ROZZ's raging vocals are authentically steeped in sarcasm and spite, and songs like "Never Say Die" and "Dead Wrong" would be iconic standards had they not been buried in obscurity and misinformed bootlegs until now. It's a must-hear for all true obsessives and would-be punk historians.

OYO – Demo II cassette

Second release from this Argentinian solo project, released May of 2023. The third release by OYO which followed this one, has also been out for well over a year. Five songs of lo-fi bedroom punk entirely comprised of drum machine, synthesizer, and vocals. Most of the songs on this cassette feel as if vocals were put on top of constantly dying in Pac-Man, which I found a bit panic-inducing. The final track, "Alien Hands (Body Language)," is so wonderfully bouncy and poppy and catchy that it is easily my favorite of the batch. Cassette released in the states by XTRO, who standardly do very limited runs of 25 copies, and seeing as this came out a year-and-a-half ago, it is already long sold out.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: XTRO

PATROL – Cold Blood EP

This shit rocks. Their Bandcamp says it's for fans of THIN LIZZY, BOSS, and SICK THOUGHTS, and that pretty much sums it up. The perfect amount of sleaze, of glam, of metal. Come for the riffs, stay for the riffs. Really, my only complaint here is that this is four songs and not forty, but I'll just flip the record and start over again.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Drunken Sailor

PUBLIC PLEASURE – Ultra Cool Charm cassette

There is an elephant that appears in the room as soon as you press play on this Portland band's latest release: they sound nearly identical to '80s SONIC YOUTH, from the stacked-pedal textured guitar squall to the disaffected, exhausted vocals that could be Kim Gordon karaoke. Specifically, PUBLIC PLEASURE pulls from the world of sound and feeling of classic, pre-major SONIC YOUTH jams like "'Cross the Breeze" and "Pacific Coast Highway." Now, here's the thing, for me at least: who cares? Loads of bands follow blueprints drawn by the RAMONES or DISCHARGE and sound incredible, and this is no different. PUBLIC PLEASURE captures a specific sound and expands it to new heights. The fuzz-heavy, slightly atonal guitar on "Shelley Duvall's Cigarette Ash" churns with vacuum tube warmth, and the noisy ambience of "S01" shimmers with heavily distorted beauty. There is a lived-in world-weariness in the songwriting, with lines like "So tired / Bring me to my heart's desire" on "Portable Zen Garden," and "Hostility is abundant / Scarcity is abundant / Memory is energy / All palaces are temporary" on "True Hearts," that maintains a dour mood throughout, and I'm here for it. Recommended!

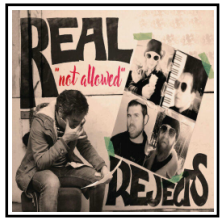
Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: self-released

PYPY – Sacred Times LP

Listening to the opener "Lonely Striped Rock" is a joyride through various genre influences that is rarely achieved. Philippe Clement's bass line starts out the song, which sounds like a rubber tube being slapped. Simon Besré's drums introduce Roy Vucino's guitar, teasing along with chatter-y little chord sweeps, making way for Annie-Claude Deschênes matter-of-fact vocals. The whole thing sounds like KLEENEX/LILIPUT song, the illusion only to be shattered by the chorus: a stomp on the drive pedal, the band catapults into a crunchy, aggressive crust punk sound—drums really working here—then drops back into the same verse structure, and then what? Little interrupter raygun synth line! Ripping guitar solo? Yup, it has that, too. This song fucking drips cool and is full of surprises, which is the sentiment that I have for this band and album at large. PYPY (pronuced ππ) is from Montreal and put out this second album a decade after their debut *Pagan Day*, which had a more psych-rock sound, still at work on *Sacred Times* (mostly on the washed-out guitar lines) though otherwise arrangements here are much more concise. All of the songs could warrant a longer write-up, but near the top is "She's Back" (a nod to *Pagan Day*'s "She's Gone"?) with the undeniable catchiness of any clever pop song, suited to the PYPY soundscape, driving from the gate, and offering a haunting hook of "I don't know where she's been, but / She's back." I hope I don't have to wait another decade for their next album. Tell your friends about this one, they'll be happy.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Goner

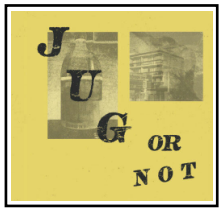
REAL REJECTS – Not Allowed 10″



You can't keep a good man down, and T.J. Cabot (a.k.a. Tyler Boutilier) of PHONE JERKS and NERVE BUTTON fame has been an ardent practitioner of the garage arts in various forms since the 2000s. His latest endeavor, the REAL REJECTS, is maybe his most thoroughly realized project yet. With nine tracks pressed on

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Mendeku Diskak / Roachleg

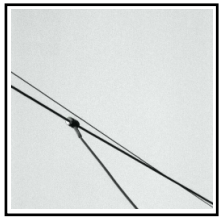
JUG – Or Not EP



It took me much longer than it should have to catch the pun in this EP's title, but JUG is affirmatively pummeling, and despite my smooth-brained density, *Or Not* is fitting for the group in both sound and spirit. Mid-tempo bummer punk that shares some DNA with LIFE STINKS, but you can tell they're from somewhere much colder than San Francisco. Ah yes, Winnipeg. No palm trees in Winnipeg. JUG may not play fast, but the songs are never plodding. Better still, they have riffs that are both punishing and memorable. Four cuts that don't overstay their welcome with a theme song to boot. An impressive debut.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Neon Taste

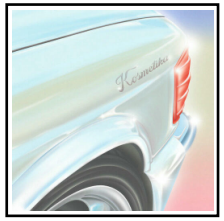
JULIETTE – Memories Fade LP



I have a niece named Juliette. She is full of power, punch and heart—and that's what the former Polish band JULIETTE also offers up with the release *Memories Fade*, on Refuse Records out of Berlin. If you yearn for the early '00s as I always do, you will love this recording. The first track "Inscribed on Your Face" bolts in with a full-on assault in the cultural vein of SAETIA and YOU AND I, so much so that before I looked more further at the link online, I said "I bet these guys are from NJ/NYC." But nope, straight outta Poland. I couldn't ascertain if the lyrics were in Polish or English, but the song titles are in English. Several of the other tracks, including "And the System," have the cozy late '90s jangle that calls to mind JEJUNE for me, which was music to my ears. I really liked the bass line that "Losing My Hope" started with. Production-wise, as a drummer I thought there was a little overemphasis on guitar in the mix and would have loved to have heard drums a little higher, but overall, this is an excellent album I hope lots of fans of the genre will hear.

Reviewer: Katy Otto
Label: Refuse

KOSMETIKA – Luxury LP



KOSMETIKA brings a mix of rock, indie, '80s new wave, and generally more relaxed vibes. My favorite track is "Fish" as it's the most weird and unique, with spoken words during the verses, in combination with some synth, transitioning to a more indie-style chorus. I also liked the variety of male and female vocals, both of which felt hypnotizingly relaxing. However, some of the tracks felt a bit long and I found myself being distracted or losing my attention. "Automobile" definitely brought me out of that with its funky beat and use of saxophone. Not quite my cup of tea, but if you like a more mellow kind of pop or rock, then you should check these guys out.

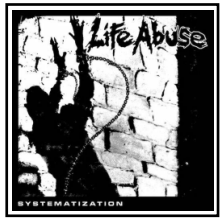
Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Spoilsport

KRYPTKEEPER – There is Power in the Blood EP

One of those cases in which a glance at the band's photo is enough to know that the music is going to be good. An eerie intro, consisting of a rustling sound over some gloomy chords, sets the tone, and after the suspense takes a hold, you get delivered with the most furious black thrash metal I've heard in a while. Quite a similar vibe to the last record by DESINTEGRACIÓN VIOLENTA, a band with which they share members, there is a prevalent punk feeling throughout in the way the songs are played and constructed. Reminds me of a punk version of POISON (the German band, not the hair metal band). Grim and disgusting with an unhealthy dose of darkness.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Saalepower 2

LIFE ABUSE – Systematization LP



Metallic crust from a veritable supergroup, featuring ex-members of LIMP WRIST, DEVOID OF FAITH, and LIBYANS, to name a few. Hard to imagine a band with such a pedigree not delivering. No surprise, *Systematization* is a beast of an album. There are hints of Swedish hardcore melodies and a tinge of shredder metal lurking beneath the surface, but it's synthesized in a very natural, coherent way. I'm reminded of 3-WAY CUM and EXTINCTION OF MANKIND, but with vocals that lean a bit more hardcore than guttural. Ten tracks of sheer brutality, made to be played loud and often.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Armageddon

LIFELESS DARK – Forces of Nature's Transformation LP

This album is dark and apocalyptic, with obvious thought put into their songs. People are going to love this album. We will hear tons of SACRILEGE comparisons. For me, I definitely hear that on a couple of songs, but this hits me as more like the best of CELTIC FROST, VOIVOD, and HELLHAMMER. I would say throw a little VENOM in there with the SACRILEGE and the rest, and this is what you might get. This also has pretty good production, especially given that the band did everything themselves. I can hear everything clearly on this album, even through a pair of cheap earbuds. I really have to say what a fantastic job the band did on this. If you like crust, early '80s metal, and dark hardcore punk like ZYGOTE or AMEBIX, then you need to buy this album. This band is great live, too.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Side Two

LOOSE LIPS – One More Chance EP

Featuring members of the PRIZE, the CHATS, and CHUBBY AND THE GANG, I was definitely set up with high expectations and interested in what sound might win out in that wild game of rock, paper, scissors. Fans of any of those bands will be excited to hear these songs, and I think the classic punky power pop sounds of the PRIZE jump out first. One thing here which helps differentiate this EP from the sounds made in the members' other projects was the splash of bar boogie, especially in the track "Told You So." And while I don't think these tracks vastly outshine their other projects or anything (at least in this first offering), I imagine they had a blast putting these songs together, and that energy definitely shines through. Would love to hear how this project might evolve further in the future.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: FOLC

MALICIOUS ALGORITHM – Progress cassette

Pretty standard grindcore/powerviolence affair here. Sludgy and crusty at times. In what always seems to be the case with these grind albums, it's the drums that captivate me the most. Super-tight and fast as hell. The dueling vocals also add to the dynamic and help to keep things interesting with their call-and-response technique. If you can't tell from the band name and album cover, MALICIOUS ALGORITHM's entire shtick revolves around technology and its direct aiding of the impending apocalypse. If you're someone like me who grows more anti-tech with each passing year, then you'll appreciate this, too. The robots are coming for us, folks.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Absolute Contempt

MALIGNANT ORDER – This is Mankind? demo cassette

Blazing outta London, this is the first release from MALIGNANT ORDER. Featuring a group of individuals who know exactly what they're doing when it comes to making hardcore punk music (member resumes include STINGRAY, ARMS RACE, GAME, PERMISSION, OBSTRUCT, list goes on), *This is Mankind?* does not disappoint, firing away on all cylinders for ten or so minutes and laying a long trail of destruction in its wake. This hefty piece is not one to be slept on.

Reviewer: Bobby Cole
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus

MERKED / V.V.M. – split cassette

This split release from MERKED and V.V.M. is a wild ride from start to finish. On the MERKED side, the Oakland-based three-piece brings their self-described "hardcore-influenced sludge-violence," which is definitely music with a thick neck. The tunes and sound clips are a chaotic mix with screaming and croaking vocals delivered with production that makes it feel like you're hearing this madness being played live in a large cement room. As for V.V.M., this San Francisco thrashcore four-piece brings the noise with a cowbell, and it's some of the best shit I've heard this month. Tracks like "Fuck You, I Quit" and "I Used to Mosh" really hit a sweet spot in my middle-aged soul. Strong recommend for people who aren't assholes.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Goat Power Recreation / Jib

MIRACLE DEBT – Under the Shadow LP

Hard-driving, mid-tempo Midwestern punk. If the late, great Jamie Ewing of BENT OUTTA SHAPE was singing for HÜSKER DÜ around the time the *New Day Rising* or *Flip Your Wig* albums came out, it would land close to here. Their Minneapolis home will draw early REPLACEMENTS and HÜSKER DÜ comparisons (like the one I just admittedly just gave), but there is a lot more than that on their sophomore release. The deft interplay between the bass and guitar crafted around the solid drums throws you the frequent curveball to keep it interesting and off any expected path. Plus, there's a DIY spirit in the lyrics that call to hold on and look forward despite personal and global tragedy.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Salinas

NAGASAKI SUNRISE – Distroyer LP

Heavy metal-infused hardcore punk on this Portuguese project's first LP. Vocals are ragged and cavernous, yet feel fresh and regulated. Classic '80s shredding guitars excel in a hardcore punk environment that resemble the uptempo changes of the Japanese wave, exulting in a charged formula that sounds neat and holds its grip until the last second. War-related themes, most specifically in the Pacific in WWII, something that may trigger curiosity or at least be considered too niche, but not in my alley.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Symphony of Destruction

NOMAD – 自殺 (Suicide) cassette

A well-deserved reissue of NYC punks NOMAD's 2013 EP. Heavily influenced by legends DISORDER and CONFUSE, NOMAD is a fine example of this style and leaves nothing to be desired for fans of classic, raw D-Beat. Sung in Japanese and featuring the fuzzy hum of distortion that we all know and love, each track on this tape absolutely rips. "人生 (Life)" is particularly great, featuring an intro that gives each instrument a moment to shred before the drums lock in and go full-force ahead. Highly recommended and essential.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Toxic State

NORCOS Y HORCHATA – Unkind Sometimes / Don't Come Crying to Me 7″

"Unkind Sometimes" starts off with such gross, distorted, driving bass that it could be the dumpster baby of your favorite FEEDTIME or NO BAILS tune. When the song kicks in, the vocals remind me of the darker NAKED RAYGUN songs, with a little NOMEANSNO seasoning for that extra aural punch. The flipside of this lil' spinner hits with some guitar feedback/pedal knob-twisting that pulls me back to the TRANS MEGETTI's 1999 opening track "Rio Nexpa," wherein it builds a tension that makes my legs sweat. It bursts into a '77-style thug bar pounder, and out of nowhere Annie comes in delivering "Everyone hide your head, everyone will soon be dead." She only plops in once to deliver this, which emphasizes the band's attuned craftsmanship to impact and craving more. I mean, come on, a great song with a greater hook only one time in the song! It is both genius and irritating. I don't know if this song is about the end of the world or the end of a friendship, but either way, it is worth a spin. This is the perfect two-sider that makes me bummed that I slept on getting their LP. I think I should mention this has folks that were in BILL BONDSMAN, BUMP-N-UGLIES, DEVIOUS ONES, the PUTZ, and many others.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: I-94

NUNOFYRBEESWAX – Hablo Raro LP

I have to say, when I saw the name of the band, part of me was a little nervous that that would be the best thing about them (meaning, I think it's brilliant). Let me put you at ease and assure you that is not the case. This is straightforward, lo-fi, raw garage rock. I'm pretty sure that makes it punk rock. Throw in some dueling male/female vocals, and you're headed right up my alley. That said, it always needs to be quality. Mid-tempo and with a strong bass line, this will have you not so much bouncing your head, but thrashing it from side to side. They have a song about Andre the Giant. The hell? This isn't just "quality," this is fucking great. Funny thing is, I don't think they really give two shits what I think or what you think or what anyone thinks. You need to check this out. From Berlin, but I swear I heard Spanish along the way.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Andalucia Über Alles / Black Bug